United Nations A/HRC/31/51/Add.2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 February 2016

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food on her mission to Morocco

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Human Rights Council the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food on her country visit to Morocco from 5 to 12 October 2015. In the report, the Special Rapporteur examines the general challenges facing Morocco in implementing measures to ensure the realization of the right to adequate food and nutrition. The Special Rapporteur highlights the particular difficulties encountered by the most vulnerable groups affected along with the challenges preventing them from their full enjoyment of the right to adequate food. The report recognizes the important steps already taken by the Government to realize the right to food, and highlights a number of recommendations for consideration by all stakeholders, in particular the development of a national framework law on the right to food.

GE.16-01949(E)

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food on her mission to Morocco*, **, ***

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* The Special Rapporteur also visited Dakhla, Western Sahara, on 10 October 2015. As she is an independent mandate holder, her visit should not be interpreted as expressing any political view concerning the present or future status of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Western Sahara. The territory is subject to the right to self-determination in conformity with the principles contained in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

** The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent developments.

*** Circulated in the language of submission and in French only.

I. Introduction

1. At the invitation of the Government of Morocco, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Hilal Elver, conducted a visit to the country from 5 to 12 October 2015. During the visit, she met with the Secretary-General and various representatives of the Inter-ministerial Delegation for Human Rights; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fishing; the High Commission on Water, Forests and Combat against Desertification; the Ministry of Justice and Freedom; the Ministry of Economy and Finance; the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Investment and Economy; the Ministry for Energy, Mines, Water and Environment; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs; and the High Commission for Planning. She also had the honour of meeting with the Minister of Artisans, Social Economy and Solidarity.

2. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur met with the President of the Chamber of Representatives. She also met with the President of the Economic, Social and Environment Council; the President of the National Human Rights Council in Rabat, as well as Regional Human Rights Councils; and the Coordinator of the Mohammed V Foundation along with their respective staff members. The Special Rapporteur also convened a round-table discussion with representatives from civil society organizations, and met with representatives from trade unions and academics, as well as representatives from the United Nations country team, international organizations and development agencies. During the mission, she visited a number of Government-led projects in Agadir and Midelt.

3. The Special Rapporteur is very grateful to the Government for facilitating her visit and for its cooperation during her time in Morocco. She also appreciates the spirit of openness with which she was able to engage in dialogue with the authorities. She is very grateful to the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for its invaluable support both before and during the visit, and offers her sincere gratitude to everyone who took the time to meet with her, particularly those who shared their personal experiences.

II. Overview of food and nutrition security

4. Morocco is a lower-middle-income country with relatively good macroeconomic stability, generally low inflation and moderately high growth rates.[1] The country's commitment to economic growth, combined with a sustained programme of wide-ranging reforms, assisted Morocco in avoiding the political and economic upheavals that beleaguered its neighbours during the Arab Spring.[2] By adopting a gradual approach to democratization, and introducing a new Constitution in 2011, the country's political landscape has remained comparatively stable, while the country has enjoyed sustained economic growth, averaging 4.5 per cent annually over the past 10 years (see E/C.12/MAR/4, para. 10). In line with the new Constitution, the Government is committed to fiscal stability and to achieving a budget deficit of no more than 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2017.[3]

[1] World Bank (2015). Available from http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/morocco/overview.

[2] Hafez Ghanem, *Agriculture and rural development for inclusive growth and food security in Morocco* (Washington, D.C., Brookings, 2015), available from http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2015/02/agriculture-development-inclusive-growth-food-security-morocco-ghanem.

[3] World Bank (2015). Available from http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/morocco/overview.

5. Crucial economic and social reforms have contributed significantly to the commendable accomplishment of Morocco in eradicating extreme poverty and eliminating hunger.[4] Recent official statistics indicate that as of 2014 the percentage of people living in situations of extreme poverty had been reduced to almost zero, while the percentage of people living in poverty stood at 0.3 per cent in urban areas, and 2.9 per cent in rural areas.[5] Food poverty was also reduced from 4.6 per cent in 1985 to 0.1 per cent in 2014. According to the High Commission for Planning 2007, poverty map communities living in rural communities targeted by the National Initiative for Human Development[6] experienced a 41 per cent reduction in poverty.

6. Despite the significant efforts that have been made, some 13.3 per cent of the population (6.3 million people) continue to live either in poverty or just above the poverty line, with those living in rural and remote areas faring worst (the poverty rate in rural areas remains more than three times greater than that in urban areas[7]). Tackling inequality and vulnerability also remains a considerable challenge, with inequality in incomes and access to services reflected in Morocco's Gini coefficient, which stands at 0.38 and is relatively high compared to other emerging economies. Major disparities in society are also evident in terms of household consumption, with a Government study noting that, in 2007, average annual expenditure by the wealthiest 10 per cent of residents in urban areas represented 18.6 times that of the 10 per cent of residents living in the least developed communities in rural areas (see E/C.12/MAR/4, para. 32). Unemployment remains high at around 9 per cent, disproportionately impacting young people and women. The rights of prisoners to access adequate food and nutrition was also highlighted as an issue of concern during the Special Rapporteur's visit, particularly in relation to the quantity and quality of food provided, along with the practice of preventing families from bringing food to their loved ones or in some cases destroying food that is offered.[8]

7. Morocco has also experienced a recent increase in adult obesity, particularly among women, with over one half of women either overweight or obese.[9] Progress in improving community infrastructure, combined with unhealthy food habits and increase in fast food consumption, are the major contributors to the increase in overweight and chronic diseases. Rapid urbanization and the adoption of Western diets high in refined carbohydrates have also contributed significantly to this trend. Cultural norms representing an intentional desire to gain weight on the part of Moroccan women in the name of beauty are also a contributing factor. Although overweight and obesity are more widespread in urban areas, they also now exist in rural areas.

8. The Special Rapporteur recognizes the significant challenges facing Morocco in its endeavours to ensure food and nutrition security for everyone, including the continued threat from climate change. She commends the impressive progress made by the Government in leading the country to a new era of economic growth and reducing overall poverty; however, she urges the State to ensure that development is inclusive. Morocco has enormous potential for growth and everyone in society must be allowed the opportunity to reap the benefits. It is therefore within the spirit of cooperation that the Special Rapporteur

[4] In June 2015, Morocco received recognition from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for reaching Millennium Development Goal 1 of cutting extreme poverty and hunger two years ahead of schedule; 72 countries around the world have so far achieved this target.

[5] Based on a threshold of $2 per day per person.

[6] Established in 2006, the programme allocated $6 billion to anti-poverty projects.

[7] Ghanem, *Agriculture and rural development*.

[8] National Human Rights Commission, *Crisis in Prisons: A Shared Responsibility* (2012).

[9] Available from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NUTRITION/Resources/281846-1271963823772/Morocco.pdf.

encourages Morocco to consider the recommendations outlined in this report as a means of ensuring that the right to adequate food and nutrition is enjoyed by everyone, giving particular priority to the most vulnerable in society.

III. Legal and policy framework

A. Legal framework

9. Morocco has demonstrated its commitment to the promotion and protection of economic and social rights by taking steps to ratify a number of important international human rights treaties and conventions, improving their implementation at the domestic level, and engaging with various United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the country's recent engagement with the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/MAR/4). As a State party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Morocco has a duty to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food.[10] It is also party to nine core international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, all of which contain provisions explicitly related to the right to adequate food.[11]

10. In the wake of the popular uprisings that swept across North Africa in 2010, Morocco responded by adopting a new Constitution by referendum in July 2011. The Constitution recognizes the supremacy of international law over domestic legislation and contains an extensive catalogue of rights, duties, freedoms and fundamental guarantees that were not previously recognized in the country, and are aligned with the principles of various international human rights treaties to which Morocco is a State party. Article 20 of the Constitution mentions the right to life, from which the right to adequate food is implied. Meanwhile under article 31, the Constitution assures the right to work, health, education and an adequate standard of living. The Special Rapporteur commends the broad consultative process undertaken in advance of adopting the amended Constitution, with the participation of political parties, trade unions, and youth and civil society organizations. She notes, however, that the Constitution does not mention the word "food" or explicitly recognize the right to food.

11. The adoption of the Constitution also resulted in the statutory recognition of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, which was established in February 2011; the National Council for Human Rights; the Office of the Ombudsman; and the Competition Council. In addition, the Inter-ministerial Delegation for Human Rights was created in 2011. A number of organic laws dealing with economic, social and cultural rights have also been adopted as a result of the Constitution, including those strengthening the rights of specific groups, developing a strategy for the Green Morocco Plan adopted in 2008, and drafting a National Charter for the Environment and Sustainable Development. A second stage of the National Initiative for Human Development was also launched, along with the implementation of a gender-sensitive budgeting system.

12. Morocco has also been proactive in developing legislation to combat the effects of climate change as a means of improving food security. Having ratified both the United

[10] Art. 2(1) and art. 11(1).

[11] See in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, arts. 1, 3, 12(2) and 14; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, arts. 24(2)(c) and (e) and 27(3); and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, arts. 25(f) and 28(1).

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol,[12] a National Charter for the Environment and Sustainable Development was established and adopted in 2012. A complementary Framework Law 99-12 was enacted in 2014 to support its operationalization. The National Charter was proposed as a measure for establishing a national policy for the protection of the environment and sustainable development, and has allowed Morocco to redouble its efforts in this regard. The Framework Law set out the rights and duties inherent to the environment and sustainable development, and explicitly mentions the fight against climate change and calls for strengthening capacities to promote adaptation to climate change. The Special Rapporteur commends Morocco's ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, which was presented in 2015 during the twenty-first Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) in Paris (also known as the 2015 Paris Climate Conference). With regard to adaptation, Morocco has already made significant efforts. Over the period 2005–2010, Morocco devoted 64 per cent of all climate-related spending in the country to adaptation, which represents 9 per cent of overall investment expenditure. It was also one of the first developing countries to deliver a climate pledge, which seeks to cut emissions by 32 per cent by 2030 on current projections.[13]

B. Institutional and policy framework

13. The significant strides that have been made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals are largely due to the impact of the previously mentioned National Initiative for Human Development. The Initiative was launched in 2005 as part of Morocco's comprehensive approach for reaching national development goals, and aims to facilitate access to basic social services, promote activities that generate employment and income, and assist people with special needs. The four-year programme (2006–2010) included human development projects focusing on poverty reduction and rural development through capacity-building, technical assistance and support to microcredit associations.[14] The Special Rapporteur visited a number of facilities supported by the Initiative, and was impressed by the variety of initiatives that have been implemented, particularly those empowering women through the development of women's agricultural cooperatives. However, she also noted that, while the Initiative is well structured and comprehensive, and has had a significant impact in reducing poverty, some structural disparities in implementation and gaps in necessary infrastructure are preventing full coverage. Further efforts to ensure that projects are disseminated to all regions, with particular attention being paid to those living in remote areas, and to vulnerable groups are recommended, while additional financial support would further benefit these projects.

14. In addition to the National Initiative for Human Development, the Government Plan for Equality was adopted in 2013 as a means of ensuring better legal protection for women, improving representation of women at the political and administrative level, and developing policies and sectoral programmes that contribute to gender equality at both the local and regional level. An integrated public policy for child protection was also introduced in 2015, which aims at implementing an integrated system for child protection. A Ministerial Commission for the protection of children was created in November 2014[15] to develop these policies.

[12] In 1995 and 2002, respectively.

[13] Available from http://mitigationpartnership.net/moroccos-intended-nationally-determined-contribution-under-unfccc.

[14] Available from http://www.indh.gov.ma/index.php/en/presentation.

[15] Decree No. 2.14.668.

15. The Inter-Ministerial Delegation for Human Rights was set up in April 2011 to coordinate eight governmental bodies that work on human rights issues. The Delegation was created to foster a human rights dimension in public policies and to consolidate Morocco's interaction with international human rights mechanisms. The Delegation is also mandated to reinforce and build capacities of non-governmental organizations dealing with human rights.

16. In relation to the right to food, Morocco was the first country in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to develop a National Nutrition Strategy, for the period 2011–2019. Following its adoption, measures were taken to speed up its implementation, including the establishment of coordinating and monitoring bodies. According to indicators published by the Ministry of Health, urgent action was deemed to be necessary in response to the nutritional situation at the time (E/C.12/MAR/4).

17. A number of other policies and strategies have also been introduced in Morocco to achieve inclusive economic growth and reduce poverty in the country, such as the Morocco Green Plan (which will be discussed in more detail later in the report), and the Halieutis Plan. The Halieutis Plan was adopted in 2009 as a comprehensive strategy for fisheries management, with the specific goal of investing in and developing the sustainability of the sector. The Plan combines a broad objective of increasing production to more than 1.66 million tons by 2020, with a specific goal of ensuring that 95 per cent of the species are managed sustainably. The three main axes of the strategy are sustainability, performance (increased catch quality) and competitiveness (production reached 10.6 million dirhams in 2015). The development of sustainable aquaculture is also a major pillar of Halieutis.

C. Morocco Green Plan

18. In 2008, the Morocco Green Plan was adopted, which is essentially a strategy to drive and reform the agricultural sector, promote the integration of agriculture into international markets, and help agriculture achieve sustainable growth through two main pillars and a variety of intersecting programmes. The first pillar relates to high-yield, intensive and market-related agriculture. The second relates to bolstering the position of small farmers through the proper promotion of crop yield growth and encouraging a shift toward crops that are better adapted to environmental conditions and market demand. The intersecting programmes involve water conservation, land ownership and the mobilization of investments. In total, the Green Morocco Plan is comprised of 1,500 projects requiring more than $10 billion to implement by 2020.

19. The Morocco Green Plan has been lauded by the international community for the significant influence it had in ensuring that the country achieved Millennium Development Goal 1 two years ahead of schedule. Indeed, it is responsible for significantly boosting the agricultural sector by promoting the integration of agriculture into international markets and assisting the sector in achieving growth. In 2015, 115 million quintals of cereal were produced. The Plan has had a positive outcome in terms of the potential benefits from cooperative production, processing and marketing of local products. However, while one of the principal aims of the Plan is to achieve food self-sufficiency, the Special Rapporteur recommends that, going forward, more focus should be placed on attaining food security. The lack of public coordination services, and environmental constraints, along with some gaps in ensuring effective consultation with local populations (more specifically, those living in hard-to-reach areas), have also hindered progress in some regions. Efforts should be made to ensure that the Plan benefits all, particularly those being targeted by Pillar II, including smallholder and family farmers. Infrastructure should be improved in remote areas to ensure easy access to markets and attract investment to rural areas. Increasing the number of projects that target women and young farmers should be encouraged. Existing

monitoring and evaluation processes should also be strengthened to ensure transparency, non-discrimination and participation by all relevant parties.

IV. Challenges for Morocco in attaining food security

A. Vulnerability of the agriculture sector

20. Agriculture remains the backbone of Morocco's economy, accounting for 15 per cent of the country's GDP and employing 46 per cent of the total national labour force. With 43 per cent of the population living in rural areas and heavily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood,[16] agricultural development is a key determinant in ensuring the welfare of rural communities and the overall stability of the country. However, some of the challenges outlined below continue to hinder agriculture and rural development in the country.

21. Firstly, agriculture in Morocco has a dual aspect, in that the modern industrial sector, which is essentially responsible for producing food for export, coexists alongside a more traditional subsistence-oriented agriculture, dedicated principally to producing food for local markets and family consumption. Small farms not exceeding five hectares account for the vast majority of the country's overall farmland, with more than 70 per cent of farmers tilling these smallholdings. Microfarms and other landless rural households account for 40 per cent of the rural population and own only 5 per cent of irrigated land and 8 per cent of cultivated land.[17] The majority of fertile land is controlled by large farms, which earn approximately nine times more than the average family farm.[18] A lack of infrastructure – combined with undetermined land ownership and insufficient access to credit, technical and marketing support – often makes it difficult for small farmers to increase their income. Small farmers are also unable to benefit from Government programmes unless their land is registered, which often results in large farms reaping the benefits of such programmes.[19]

22. Secondly, the agricultural sector remains susceptible to the pressures of trade liberalization,[20] and small farmers are particularly vulnerable to instability in global markets and the impact of local markets being flooded with produce when large farmers fail to sell it overseas.[21] A high dependence on imports also leaves the agricultural sector exposed, particularly in periods of high volatility in world food prices. Morocco consumes three times the amount of imported cereal than the world average and spends approximately 20 per cent of its export revenue on importing food.[22] Although Morocco is essentially self-sufficient in food production, its policies in relation to imports and emergency supplies should be regularly reviewed to ensure that food security is retained.[23]

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[16] The agriculture sector employs 75 per cent of the rural workforce.

[17] Patricia Biermayr-Jenzano and Shinan Kassam, *Understanding gender and poverty dimensions of high value agricultural commodity chains in the Souss-Masaa-Draa region of southwestern Morocco*, January 2014, p. 8.

[18] Ghanem, *Agriculture and rural development*.

[19] Gender and Poverty, SMD, January 2014, Biernay, Kassam and others, p. 8.

[20] Available from http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/country/enpi_csp_morocco_en.pdf.

[21] Available from http://sustainablefoodtrust.org/articles/moroccan-agriculture-facing-challenges-divided-system/.

[22] The agriculture sector employs 75 per cent of the rural workforce (see footnote 20 above).

[23] Ibid.

23. The fisheries sector accounts for 3 per cent of GDP and employs around 500,000 people.[24] According to Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries statistics released in 2008, the Morocco fishing productivity of 1,017,000 tons was 15 per cent more than the previous year. The Moroccan fishing industry is also largely recognized as the largest producer in Africa, with around 3,000 offshore fishing boats and thousands of small fishing vessels.[25]

24. While the Special Rapporteur recognizes the efforts that have been made by the Government to improve the situation of artisanal fishermen at the regional level through the introduction of the National Coastal Management Plan, she received reports that not all artisanal fisher folk benefit from the necessary infrastructure. Indeed, while the large ports are well equipped and monitored, some among the artisanal fishing community struggle due to a lack of basic facilities. Competition from much larger coastal vessels, such as trawlers, means that, in some cases, even when small-scale fishermen have access to basic infrastructure, their production may remain marginal.[26] The equipment they use may be basic and often not sufficient to protect them in rough seas. The Special Rapporteur commends the implementation of training programmes for young fisher folk as well as literacy programmes aimed at those active in the fishing industry, and she encourages the Government to ensure that such programmes are rolled out across all regions as a means of assisting scale fisher folk in developing their trade. Efforts should also be made to ensure that existing monitoring mechanisms are strengthened to ensure that annual fishing permits are distributed in a transparent manner in accordance with international fishing regulations.

B. Climate change

25. Morocco has four major geographic regions, including the coastal planes; the hills to the North that are parallel to the Mediterranean Sea; the hills to the centre that include the Middle Atlas, High Atlas and Anti-Atlas; and the desert hills. With such a diverse geographic terrain, Morocco is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Water and environmental resources – which are already under extensive pressure from population growth, industrialization, tourism and agricultural extension – are at particular risk. Predictions indicate that, over the coming years, the country will gradually display signs of increasing aridity due to reduced rainfall and higher temperatures. While it is suggested that it will remain relatively stable in the short term, increased aridity will have negative effects on overall agricultural yields from 2030 onwards.[27]

26. Soil degradation in dry areas will be exacerbated by climate change, while prolonged drought has already resulted in negative ecological consequences. Increased population pressure over limited natural resources – along with overexploitation of forestry assets, elimination of natural vegetation from slope lands, overgrazing, and cultivation of exposed land in arid and desert regions – and poor land management have all contributed to soil erosion. It is estimated that about 35 per cent of the Moroccan rural population lives in areas of serious degradation. This is of particular concern for those living in poverty whose livelihoods depend on forest resources, as extra pressure will be placed on ecosystems when croplands are no longer able to sustain them. Recognizing the challenges posed by soil degradation, the Special Rapporteur commends the efforts being made to fight erosion and

[24] See "Moroccan economy: 4,8% growth in the 3rd quarter of 2011", available from www.invest.gov.ma/?Id=39&lang=en&RefCat=5&Ref=198&nb_aff=10 .

[25] Available from http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/country/enpi_csp_morocco_en.pdf.

[26] Available from https://assets.mcc.gov/press/pub-2013001132901-kin-volume-two-number-one-morocco.pdf.

[27] World Bank, *Morocco study on the impact of climate change on the agricultural sector*, available from http://www.fao.org/nr/climpag/pub/FAO_WorldBank_Study_CC_Morocco_2008.pdf.

protect natural resources through the National Plan for Watershed Management, as well as investments in reforestation, and she encourages the Government to ensure that these projects are rolled out across all regions.

27. Water resources are under more pressure due to a combination of population growth, economic development and a strong decline in precipitation. As a result, water availability has dropped from 3,500 m^3 per person per year in 1960 to 1,000 m^3 in 2000, with predictions estimating that it will further fall to 490 m^3 in 2020, below the level indicated by the United Nations as "absolute water scarcity".[28] With agriculture consuming more than 83 per cent of harvested water, scarcity and irregularity in water sources are major hindrances to its development. Any shortage or excess rainfall therefore instantly impacts the overall economy. Given the country's shortage in natural resources, particularly arable land and water, care must be taken to ensure that the impact of intensive agricultural production, combined with large-scale irrigation schemes, industrialization and urbanization, are efficiently managed in order to protect and enable equitable distribution of water sources.

28. Morocco's coastline is also becoming increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. With approximately 3,500 km of shoreline, rising sea levels, storm surges and coastal flooding pose a significant threat to agriculture, fishing, water supplies, tourism and the country's unique ecosystems. More than 9.5 million people occupy the coastal cities of Morocco, and this number is steadily growing. The rural north-east coast is at particular risk, with families living in situations of poverty and dependant for a living on fishing, farming and livestock raising already experiencing the impacts of climate change and reliant on overseas remittances for survival.[29] While the Government is increasingly aware of the vulnerability of its coastline to climate change, this has not translated into a balanced and coordinated policy response aimed at reducing coastal vulnerability,[30] and it is recommended that an integrated strategy for mitigation and adaptation be adopted to address this.

29. Desertification and increasing potential for drought as a result of climate change will have a considerable impact on agriculture over the coming years given Morocco's situation in a fragile ecosystem. The adaption policies outlined in the Morocco Green Plan are important and due care should be taken to ensure that large-scale farming and intensive agriculture provided for in Pillar I do not drain resources such as fresh water and lead to land degradation. The Special Rapporteur suggests that agroecology be injected into future projects as a means of protecting biodiversity and environmental resources, and maintaining social equality and climate-friendly agriculture. Intensive use of fertilizers should also be avoided. Overall efforts should be made to ensure that a balance is maintained in implementing projects through Pillar I and Pillar II.

30. In addition to the Morocco Green Plan, Morocco has introduced a number of other important initiatives to fight against the adverse impact of climate change on agriculture. The Government's National Action Plan, which focuses on promoting practical tools and disseminating information on combating desertification, have made some progress in

[28] See "Country in Focus: Morocco – Facing scarcity", available from https://www.globalwaterjobs.com/News/countryinfocusmorocco.html.

[29] Department for International Development, *Adaptation is ... Protecting coastal communities in northern Morocco*, available from http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Documents/adaptation-is-protecting-coastal-communities-morocco.pdf.

[30] Samira Idllalene and Nora Van Cauwenbergh, "Improving legal grounds to reduce vulnerability to coastal flooding in Morocco – A plea for an integrated approach to adaptation and mitigation", *Ocean & Coastal Management*, vol. 120 (February 2016), pp. 189–197.

rehabilitating natural and oasis ecosystems, as well as implementing water resource harvesting and the integrated management of natural resources. The Climatic Disaster Insurance Programme, started by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1996 to tackle drought, is also aimed at protecting small-scale farmers from climatic risks.[31]

31. Morocco continues to demonstrate its political willingness and responsibility to fight climate change, and the Special Rapporteur commends the important role it has played in international climate change diplomacy. In November 2016, Morocco will host the twenty-second Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 22). Having submitted its intended Nationally Determined Contribution, Morocco has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 13 per cent by 2030, proposing to go much further if financial support is provided. Based on these targets, Morocco is considered the fourth most ambitious country in reducing its greenhouse gas emissions at the global level.[32]

C. Rural poverty

32. Poverty in Morocco is essentially concentrated in rural and remote areas, where the poverty incidence is three times higher than in urban areas.[33] Regional disparities are significant in terms of poverty distribution, with difficult geographic terrain hindering the development of infrastructure and isolating communities in times of extreme weather. Mountainous areas and steppes – where soil is susceptible to erosion – are particularly vulnerable, and are among the poorest areas. Household income in rural areas is severely impacted by climatic conditions, particularly during periods of drought, with traditional small-scale farmers and shepherds particularly affected.

33. As mentioned previously, the majority of the rural population is largely dependent on agriculture as a source of income, with many employed in informal agricultural work. Insufficient access to basic social services and infrastructure, particularly in the mountainous zones and semi-arid plains and uplands, as well as a lack of access to financial services, impedes development. Also contributing to poverty is a lack of diversification of agricultural activities offering alternative employment, particularly in times of drought. Another factor is the weakness of community organizations, which lack the necessary training and support to take charge of their own development.[34]

34. The goal of Morocco's long-term 2020 strategy for rural development is to correct regional and local imbalances, and develop and optimize natural resources. Its objectives are to increase agricultural production and opportunities for agricultural employment and income, create and diversify employment in off-farm and non-farm activities, halt environmental degradation, improve education and professional training for rural women and men, improve services related to the quality of life and well-being, and correct regional and local imbalances in infrastructure and regional development. The approach gives preference to grass-roots initiatives and to participation and accountability of rural communities and local partnerships.

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[31] Mohammad Badrawi, "Green Morocco Plan focuses on sustainable agriculture", 12 October 2014, available from http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2014/10/httpalhayatcomarticles4906517----.html.

[32] Climate Action Tracker, available at: http://climateactiontracker.org/countries/morocco.

[33] Ghanem, *Agriculture and rural development*.

[34] International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2015.

V. Groups living in situations of particular vulnerability

35. The Special Rapporteur identified the following groups as often living in situations of particular vulnerability and requiring specific initiatives to ensure that they are equally able to access adequate food and nutrition.

A. Women

36. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Morocco has committed itself to the promotion of women's rights. Recognizing that equality is at the centre of any development process, the Government of Morocco has dedicated itself to improving the status of women over recent years. As mentioned previously, in 2006 a national strategy for gender equity and equality was adopted by integrating a gender-based approach into development policies and programmes. One of the main recommendations issued concerned the elaboration of a plan for equality and eventual parity for the period 2011–2015. The Plan was drawn up in 2010 and adopted by the Government Council in March 2011. In 2014, an Inter-Ministerial Commission was created to monitor the implementation of the Governmental Plan for Equality. According to the 2014 edition of the Social Institutions and Gender Index,[35] Morocco has low levels of discrimination against women in social institutions.

37. Article 19 of the 2011 Constitution establishes that men and women should enjoy equal rights and freedoms in all civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental matters. The Habous Code (concerning land property) prohibits religious organizations from excluding women in favour of men. It also forbids the transfer of *habous/wakf* status to property in favour of boys and the exclusion of girls (see E/C.12/MAR/4, para. 45). The introduction of gender-sensitive budgeting is also a positive step which constitutes an operational tool that can be used to develop assessments of public policies from a gender perspective.

38. Despite the considerable efforts that have been made in improving gender equality and the major reforms that have taken place, economic and social development indicators demonstrate that women are lagging behind men in practically all areas. A deeply embedded patriarchal socio-cultural order, along with delays in implementation at the institutional level, has hindered the transition from strategy and legal frameworks into significant and tangible progress towards gender equality.[36] Women in rural communities are particularly disadvantaged, especially young women without schooling. The incidence of poverty is also high in households headed by women.[37]

39. A strong sense of traditionalism further compounds the situation, as men are the principal keepers of land and other basic means of production. While Moroccan women have the same ownership rights to land as men, those rights are often limited by tradition. Despite a favourable legal framework, women's access to land is often restricted, particularly in rural areas, and few women own land. Even in cases where they do own land, male relatives often manage it. While women are legally entitled to access non-land assets and to manage such property as they wish, under Morocco's standard matrimonial system, spouses retain their own property. Women own only 7 per cent of the land in Morocco.[38] Fewer opportunities for formal employment, lower incomes and fewer opportunities to

[35] Available from www.genderindex.org/country/morocco.

[36] Available from http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/country/enpi_csp_morocco_en.pdf, p. 16.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Available from http://spring-forward.unwomen.org/en/countries/morocco.

diversify their income sources leave women vulnerable and unable to escape their circumstances. A high level of female illiteracy combined with a lack of awareness about reforms further prevents progress.[39]

40. Climate change also has a disproportionate impact on women in Morocco. With land degradation leading to food insecurity, women are often at the front line in fighting desertification. While men focus on market-oriented activities such as crop or livestock production, and thus obtain credit and other facilities, women tend to household and farm chores that include cultivating the land, growing food crops, collecting firewood and fetching water. However, women's traditional roles and knowledge as food producers and managing natural resources may also be challenged by the effects of desertification. Erosion and diminished soil fertility result in decreased crop and livestock productivity and lessening sources of income. With men in search of employment and alternative income, women may become de facto heads of households. However, without ownership of assets such as land, women cannot access credit and extension and technological services. This, in turn, affects their ability to sustain their families and manage other natural resources that lay the foundation of sustainable production systems. They may also face traditional disadvantages in accessing community services and decision-making power, with access to critical resources often mediated by relationships with men. They may also be excluded from participation in land conservation and development projects, as well as from policy-making processes generally.

41. The Special Rapporteur commends the efforts being made by the Government to foster a solidarity-based economy and the creation of women's cooperatives through Pillar II of the Morocco Green Plan. Approximately 15,000 women's cooperatives, involving some 30,000 women, have been created in recent years, two thirds of them in rural areas (see E/C.12/MAR/4, para. 39). Women, who account for 43 per cent of the beneficiaries, constitute the social group whose projects have proved most successful and have helped to increase households' financial resources (ibid.). The Special Rapporteur visited some of these cooperatives and was impressed by the level of dedication invested by the women involved, along with the distinct sense of empowerment they displayed.

B. Children

42. By ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Morocco has committed itself to itself to guaranteeing the rights of all children in the country. Indeed, since then, important steps have been taken to adopt legislative and other measures to provide protection for children, some of which were mentioned previously.

43. Children in rural areas and poor families are most affected by the lack of access to adequate food and nutrition. According to a family health survey of the population conducted in 2011, 14.9 per cent of children under 5 years of age suffered from stunted growth, which is generally due to chronic malnutrition during pregnancy and infancy. Stunting affected 28.3 per cent of children living in poverty, compared to 6.7 per cent of children living in wealthier families.[40] By its own admission, the Government recognizes that the fact that the stunted growth rate is higher than the poverty rate for the same period (14 per cent) indicates that lack of nutritional information at the household level is a source of serious concern (see E/C.12/MAR/4, para. 155). In addition, 9 per cent of children under 5 years of age suffer from severe malnutrition; this category includes 11 per cent of children

[39] Oriana Wuerth. "The Reform of the Moudawana: The Role of Women's Civil Society Organizations in Changing the Personal Status Code of Morocco", *Hawwa*, vol. 3, No. 3 (2005).

[40] Ministry of Health, 2004.

living in rural areas and 13 per cent of those living in households belonging to the poorest quintile. There are four times as many underweight children in the poorest quintile than in the richest quintile. Fourteen per cent of children under 5 years of age are overweight (see ibid.).

44. A number of strategies and programmes implemented by the Ministry of Health and its partners to promote a healthy diet and to address the problem of insufficient micronutrients have led to an improvement in the population's nutritional status. The Ministry of Health and its partners are currently developing a national integrated global communication strategy in support of life cycle nutrition (see ibid., para. 157). However, the Special Rapporteur is concerned at reports she received in relation to feeding practices for infants and young children. While the 2011 national survey shows that 96.6 per cent of children were breastfed, it also notes that among children under 5 years who had never been breastfed, less than one third (30.3 per cent) had been initiated to breastfeeding within one hour after delivery.[41] While the exclusive breastfeeding rate until the age of 6 months is falling, bottle feeding is becoming common; complementary feeding, even though relatively diversified, is still introduced too early or too late, despite the existence of a national strategy for breastfeeding.

45. The Special Rapporteur commends the significant progress made in providing access to education for children in Morocco and welcomes its commitment to continuing its efforts to ensuring education for all children in the country. Despite progress made, however, she reiterates the concerns highlighted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that disparities between school enrolment rates for girls and boys still exist (see E/C.12/MAR/CO/4, para. 11). Many children (particularly girls in rural areas) do not attend school and, if they do, the majority drop out after elementary school. This becomes clear from looking at literacy rates, which equal only 10 per cent for females in rural areas. The rate is 39 per cent among women in general and 65 per cent for men, which shows the differences in gender as well.[42] The State must ensure that these barriers are removed and that girls receive the same opportunities as boys for the future. The quality of education available is also an issue of concern, particularly in the rural areas.

46. In rural areas, most young illiterates have never attended school, either because they live in remote villages too far away from a school or because their families are poor and cannot afford to educate them. The impact of culture and traditions on the decisions regarding schooling are marginal. When the cost of sending a child to school is too high, and its future return is uncertain, poor parents are left with no choice but to employ their children doing tasks that can have an immediate impact on their well-being. The role of the Government is critical in such a situation to change incentives for poor people in favour of education. High dropout rates are another problem that undermines human capital development in Morocco and has a potential impact on the poverty rate. The net enrolment rate in secondary schools does not exceed 44 per cent at the national level.[43]

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[41] Available from www.sante.gov.ma/Publications/Etudes_enquete/Documents/Indicateurs%20regionaux_ENPSF-2011.pdf, p. 192.

[42] Economic Policy Research Institute, *Country profile: Morocco*, available from http://epri.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/33-Morocco.pdf.

[43] Ibid, p. 11.

C. Unemployed youth

47. Morocco has ratified the International Labour Organization Employment Policy Convention, which provides the overarching normative policy framework on employment policy development and implementation, and calls on member States "to declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment".[44] Economic development and creating opportunities for employment figure high in the National Human Development Initiative.

48. Unemployment, informal employment and underemployment are sources of concern. In addition to the fact that this is a social issue which threatens human dignity, citizens' attitudes to their country and its institutions, and the protection of human rights, this situation intensifies social marginalization, which affects women in particular, and is a serious obstacle to economic development and to the general improvement of living and labour conditions.[45] The unemployment rate in Morocco averaged 10.6 per cent from 1999 until 2014, reaching an all-time high of 15.1 per cent in the third quarter of 1999 and a record low of 7.8 per cent in the second quarter of 2006.[46] Although young people in Morocco make up 30 per cent of the population, and one tenth of the region's total youth population, their levels of exclusion are high; a recent World Bank survey revealed that 49 per cent of Moroccan youths are neither in school nor in the workforce.[47] With a view to promoting employment, the Government has undertaken, in coordination with socioeconomic partners, to reduce the unemployment rate by supporting economic growth and investment, developing vocational training and skills, and implementing a proactive employment promotion policy (see E/C.12/MAR/4, para. 58). Action in support of young people is planned on behalf of the long-term unemployed (Taatir), to promote the integration of the informal economy (Istiaabe), and to support social economy sectors[48] and income-generating activities.

49. Among the young, ages 15-24, more than 20 per cent were illiterate at the end of 2009, 28 per cent among females and 35 per cent in rural areas. The reasons behind the persistence of high illiteracy rates in Morocco differ between urban and rural areas. In the cities, one quarter of young illiterates attended school for a short period of time; they left because they failed, dropped out or were expelled by the school. The rest never attended school due to the poverty of their families, which pushed them prematurely into the labour market. The absence of adequate schools and facilities for disabled children is another reason that concerns 1 of 10 urban illiterate children. In rural areas, most young illiterates never attended school, either because they lived in remote villages too far away from a school or their families were poor and could not afford to educate them. High dropout rates are another problem undermining human capital development in Morocco with potential impacts on poverty. A National Employment Strategy for Youth had been adopted and

[44] ILO, C122 – Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), available from www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312267.

[45] Available from http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/country/enpi_csp_morocco_en.pdf, p. 15.

[46] Available from www.tradingeconomics.com/morocco/unemployment-rate.

[47] Available from www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/05/14/challenge-of-youth-inclusion-in-morocco.

[48] The MOURAFAKA programme, which supports new cooperatives in the context of social economy development projects, has been allocated a five-year budget of 85 million dirhams. It will eventually benefit 2,000 cooperatives and will promote the creation of 40,000 jobs for the self-employed. Regional social economy development plans based on contracts concluded with the regions are currently being implemented in all regions with a view to encourage the creation of income-generating activities in the context of the social economy.

many measures were being undertaken in that regard, including the increase of employment agencies to promote job creation throughout the country.[49] The Special Rapporteur is concerned that, without opportunities for gainful employment, particularly in rural areas, young people risk being trapped in a cycle of poverty, thus impacting on their overall well-being, including their ability to access adequate and nutritious food.

D. Persons with disabilities

50. Since 2007, Morocco has been party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. While the Special Rapporteur welcomes the efforts being made by the State to address the rights of persons with disabilities, including through the National Plan of Action for Health and Disability (2015-2021), she is concerned that insufficient measures have been taken to ensure that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to all facilities and services open to or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, art. 9). Additional measures must be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of society, including by ensuring equal access to appropriate and affordable public services, and guaranteeing an adequate standard of living, including equal access to adequate food and nutrition, and to effective social protection, including poverty reduction in line with article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

51. The Special Rapporteur is particularly concerned about the obstacles faced by children with disabilities in enjoying their right to adequate food and nutrition. She reiterates the recommendation highlighted by the United Nations Committee on Economic and Social Rights, urging that the adoption of the Draft Law 97.13 on the protection and advancement of persons with disabilities (Draft Framework Law) be expedited as a matter of priority (E/C.12/MAR/CO/4).

VI. Developing a national right to food framework law

52. The Special Rapporteur recognizes the significant progress Morocco has made in reducing poverty through the various reforms that have been implemented over recent years, along with the numerous well-formulated and well-intended policies and strategies to realize the right to adequate food. In order to ensure that momentum continues, the development of a more concrete framework is paramount to ensure that the plethora of policies, strategies and programmes are integrated. The Special Rapporteur recommends that this could be achieved through an overarching legal framework on the right to food.

53. Based on the Right to Food Guidelines, and following positive examples from other countries, the framework law could harmonize the existing coordination mechanisms designed to involve relevant ministries and other stakeholders as well as the efficiency of policies and programmes designed to respect, protect and fulfil the right to adequate food. Local authorities and civil society organizations should play a key role in the implementation of such a framework law and the right to adequate food.

54. As noted by the Special Rapporteur's predecessor, a framework law presents the following benefits:

[49] Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16551&LangID=E.

(a) Institutionalization of a coherent and integrated approach, through the creation of an independent council formed by relevant Government ministries and institutions and members of civil society, associations of food producers and the private sector, which will provide advice to the Government in matters related to food and nutrition security;

(b) Grounding of national policies and programmes in a society-wide consensus, increasing their survival in the face of changes in Governments;

(c) Predictability and ring-fencing of resources for food and nutrition programmes, possibly through the establishment of a national fund;

(d) Strengthened accountability and institutional oversight of food and nutrition security programmes, including on the way information is collected and programmes assessed, increasing transparency and safeguards against the use of political criteria in the targeting of programmes (A/68/288).

55. The Special Rapporteur was encouraged by the support expressed by both Government representatives and civil society for such a framework, and commends the steps that have already been taken in this regard.

VII. Dakhla, Western Sahara

56. On 10 October 2015, the Special Rapporteur visited Dakhla in Western Sahara. During her time there, she visited several agricultural and fishing projects, as well as a women's cooperative.

57. Boasting some of the richest fishing grounds in the world, the economy relies heavily on fishing and employs some two thirds of the workforce. During her visit, the Special Rapporteur visited the impressive port of Dakhla, where she witnessed abundant commercial and large-scale fishing projects for both national consumption (the principal objective of the Hout Bladi[50] project) and for export. While it is evident that considerable investment and resources are being poured into the development of the fishing sector, there is concern that not everyone working in the industry is reaping the benefits. Indeed, the Special Rapporteur learned that small-scale fisher folk are among the poorest in Western Sahara. While there have been efforts to integrate the local population by offering supplementary licences, the expert learned that Sahrawi people who are involved in the fishing industry struggle to find employment in the ports in order to sustain their livelihood.

58. Vulnerability to climate change, which is having a negative environmental and social impact on coastal communities, poses a considerable challenge to small-scale fishers. As a result, many fisher folk are forced to venture beyond the boundary from the shore in order to seek their daily catch.

59. The exploitation of fisheries has led to several fisheries agreements, notably between Morocco and the European Union, since 2005.[51] In late 2011, the agreement was terminated following a vote against its renewal by the European Parliament, due to concerns citing a failure to fund the development of local fisheries and other shortcomings in terms of

[50] Promotional campaign in favour of the consumption of seafood products and designed to inform and sensitize the public on the benefits of marine products for human health.

[51] Robert Kennedy Foundation submission to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, February 2015.

ecological sustainability.[52] The agreement has since been reinstated as of 2014, with European Union lawmakers approving a fisheries agreement with Morocco. The Special Rapporteur notes that any future agreement should be for the benefit of the local population as mentioned in the United Nations Legal Opinion of 2002.[53]

60. While significant efforts are being made to develop infrastructure in Dakhla and many are benefiting from agricultural projects as well as the exploitation of fisheries, economic growth is not benefiting all. The unemployment rate in Western Sahara stands at 15 per cent, with young people and women faring worst. Women are faced with additional difficulties in accessing employment.[54] The Special Rapporteur is concerned about reports she received highlighting the difficulties faced by the local population in accessing education, especially at the university level. Without access to education, employment opportunities are limited, and the likelihood of falling into poverty and food insecurity is significantly increased. More must be done to ensure that economic growth benefits the local population, and the Special Rapporteur supports the recommendation made by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which suggests that a human rights-based poverty reduction strategy be adopted that specifically targets the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups, with sufficient financial and other resources allocated to ensure implementation, and ensures that these resources are fairly distributed among those affected by poverty ().

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

61. **In recent years, Morocco has embarked on a proactive process of modernization and democratization, and the country has made impressive strides in reducing poverty, through the introduction of crucial economic and social reforms. The adoption of a wide range of policies and programmes to ensure the effective enjoyment of the right to food, as part of the right to an adequate standard of living, should be commended. However, as evidenced in this report, considerable challenges remain, particularly in regard to tackling inequality and vulnerability, along with increasing disparities in income between regions, as well as between urban and rural areas. Although the emergence of a free market economy has assisted with the impressive growth experienced by the country in recent years, this growth has not benefited all. While some parts of the country are being transformed, poverty remains particularly high in rural and remote areas as the income gap widens. The disproportionate impact of unemployment on young people and women also needs to be addressed, as does the lack of implementation of legislation promoting right to food policies. As one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the adverse effects of climate change, Morocco also faces a significant challenge in ensuring that its food sources are protected.**

62. **The Special Rapporteur commends the Government's Morocco Green Plan, which has enormous potential for transforming the agricultural sector into a stable source of growth, competitiveness and broad-based economic development. However, more work is necessary to accomplish the plan and to ensure that everyone benefits,**

[52] FIAN International, *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2013*, p. 59, available from www.fian.org/fileadmin/media/publications/Watch_2013_eng_WEB_final.pdf.

[53] Letter dated 29 January 2002 from the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, addressed to the President of the Security Council, available from http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2002/161.

[54] Economic, Social and Environmental Council, 2013.

particularly smallholder farmers in rural and remote areas. Steps should therefore be taken to ensure that poor households producing high-valued local products receive fair market value and are effectively consulted in decisions that affect their livelihoods. Large-scale farming operatives targeted through Pillar I of the Plan should avoid resource depletion as a result of intensive agricultural practices. If this balance is struck between the two Pillars, the Special Rapporteur believes that the Plan could enhance its role as a determining role in improving food security, and inspire other countries in the region as a model of good practice.

63. In order to ensure a future where everyone will benefit from Morocco's economic growth, action must be taken to more effectively implement food security policies. In the long term, higher growth rates need to be achieved, which will lead to sustainable job creation while proving to be more inclusive. The quality and governance of public services, including for youths and women, must be strengthened, while the development model needs to be environmentally sustainable. Civil society will play an essential role in fortifying Morocco's commitment to guaranteeing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the future, and should be encouraged to incorporate economic, social and cultural rights in its manifesto, particularly the right to food.

64. The Special Rapporteur offers the following specific recommendations to the Government.

Legal and institutional framework

65. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

66. Devise and adopt a national right to food framework law based on time-bound benchmarks and effective implementation plans for each region. The framework should also include the necessary budgetary and fiscal measures to ensure sustainability in the long term. Authorities and agencies responsible for implementation should be identified and appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanisms established. The full and active participation of all actors concerned should be ensured, including the most vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition.

67. Ensure proper implementation of existing laws by strengthening monitoring and accountability mechanisms; ensure that laws currently under revision are in line with international human rights standards.

68. Ensure that, going forward, adequate resources are provided to implement the poverty reduction measures outlined in the National Initiative for Human Development, with particular focus on reviewing the structural disparities in implementation, and targeting the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups, particularly those living in remote areas.

69. Promote and encourage independent civil society as a means of fortifying Morocco's commitment to guaranteeing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the future, and encourage the incorporation of economic, social and cultural rights in its manifesto, particularly the right to food.

Morocco Green Plan

70. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that agricultural intensification projects launched through Pillar I of the Plan are environmentally sustainable and avoid resource depletion.

Agriculture

71. Develop programmes to strengthen community organizations, through necessary training and support to enable them to take charge of their own development and ensure diversification of agricultural activities offering alternative employment opportunities.

72. Regularly review policies in relation to imports and emergency supplies to ensure that food security is retained.

73. Encourage an enabling framework for farmers to use agro-ecological practices and provide training on alternative methods of pest control as a means of avoiding the excessive use of synthetic pesticides.

74. Increase already established monitoring mechanisms to ensure that annual fishing permits are distributed in a transparent manner in accordance with international fishing regulations.

Environmental issues and climate change

75. Prioritize vulnerability assessments, adaptation and mitigation financing and support to urban poor, small farmers and coastal communities that are particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

76. Promote the conservation and management of agricultural biodiversity to ensure genetic diversity in order to sustain the natural resource base for farmer resilience, innovation and adaptation to climate change.

77. Increase implementation of environmental laws to protect the watersheds, forests and rivers, which are the primary sources of food. Mechanisms to prevent soil erosion and flooding, and to enrich biodiversity, should be implemented.

Women

78. Promote awareness and facilitate the participation of local populations, particularly women and youths, with the support of non-governmental organizations, in development measures to tackle the impact of climate change.

79. Take all measures necessary to eliminate prejudices and negative practices that undermine women's enjoyment of rights in line with the obligations assumed by Morocco under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

80. Strengthen the participation of women in relation to the right to food, particularly at the decision-making level. Provision should be made for women who live in remote areas to be able to participate fully in political life.

81. Implement the provisions of the Habous Code and take measures to eliminate the sociocultural barriers currently preventing women from exercising their right to land.

82. Take measures to promote healthy eating among women and highlight the negative health risks associated with overweight and obesity.

83. Raise awareness about optimal breastfeeding practices among the population and support women and their families to practice optimal infant and young children feeding practices.

84. Strengthen implementation and enforcement of the Breastfeeding Code and establish an independent monitoring system.

85. Review, analyse and modify policies and programmes on poverty reduction to ensure that gender concerns are taken into account in effective ways.

86. Encourage the implementation of gender-sensitive budgeting as an operational tool to develop assessments of public policies from a gender perspective.

87. Improve the identification of eligible beneficiaries of social protection schemes, in order to ensure that they reach the poorest and most disadvantaged sectors of society, including those living in rural areas; implement measures to ensure that targeting of beneficiaries is transparent and that corruption is eradicated at all levels within the system.

Children

88. Ensure that the State budget reflects a commitment to children's rights by guaranteeing equitable and adequate allocation of resources for the provision of essential services for children, particularly in ensuring their right to healthy and nutritious food.

89. Reinforce efforts to allocate appropriate resources, and develop, adopt and implement coordinated policies and programmes to improve and protect the nutrition of children, particularly in rural areas.

90. Facilitate greater and equal access to primary health service, reduce the incidence of maternal, child and infant mortality, and promote proper breastfeeding practices in line with the recommendations highlighted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The role of social workers should be strengthened and they should be remunerated accordingly to ensure that the rights of children to access adequate and nutritious food are effectively monitored, and awareness in relation to good nutrition is raised at the family level.

Unemployed youth

91. Strengthen existing efforts to significantly reduce the unemployment rate by targeting women and young people, and increase the number of retraining programmes and vocational and technical training programmes, as well as incentives for employers to create jobs, and hire women and youth where appropriate.

Persons with disabilities

92. Expedite Draft Law 97.13 on the protection and advancement of persons with disabilities, currently being reviewed in Parliament, in order to ensure the legal protection of persons with disabilities.

93. Ensure that a disability perspective is taken fully into account in nutrition policy and programming, maternal and child health policy, and broader health initiatives.

Dakhla, Western Sahara

94. Adopt a human rights-based poverty reduction strategy that specifically targets the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups, with sufficient financial and other resources allocated to ensure implementation and guarantee that resources are fairly distributed among all those affected by poverty, in line with the recommendations made by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

95. Ensure that existing educational resources benefit the local population and introduce mechanisms to significantly reduce unemployment and develop technical

training programmes for Sahrawi people as well as incentives for employers to hire young people without discrimination.

96. **Monitor the implementation of education and youth programmes, and ensure that the local population is afforded equal opportunities to education and employment, with a view to reducing poverty and guaranteeing food and nutrition security for all, in line with international law.**